

# **TERRORISM PREPAREDNESS AND PREVENTION: REPORTING SUSPICIOUS PERSONS, ACTIVITIES, VEHICLES, ETC.**

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Neighborhood Policing Resource Team  
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First and foremost, continue to live your daily lives. Terrorism is only successful when it disrupts the lives of the people whose government is targeted. Prepare as you would for any emergency, such as an earthquake, by having a 3- to 5-day supply of water and canned or dried food, blankets, flashlights, matches, and other items that are part of any standard emergency kit. Have a plan for your family or business that includes places where family members or employees should go in various scenarios. Go to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's website at **www.ready.gov** for more information about threats and planning.

## **Reporting Suspicious Persons, Activities, Vehicles, Etc.**

You should also be vigilant and aware of your surroundings and report anything that doesn't fit in or seems out of the ordinary. Be aware yet fair. Avoid stereotyping and profiling. Some examples of persons, activities, vehicles, etc. that could be considered suspicious are listed below. Some are clearly emergencies. They should be reported immediately by calling **911**. Others may be considered as non-emergencies. They should be reported to the SDPD at **(619) 531-2000**. It will notify and coordinate actions with the FBI and other government agencies. When a terrorist act appears imminent you should also notify any law enforcement or security personnel that are in the immediate area. If there is any doubt as to whether the situation is an emergency it is always better to be on the safe side and call **911**.

The ability of the police to locate and arrest criminals often depends on the thoroughness and accuracy of the report you submit. The following information checklist should be used for reporting both emergency and non-emergency crimes:

- Type of activity
- Location: exact street address and nearest cross street
- Time of activity
- Weapons involved
- Vehicle information: type, license number, color, year, make, model, unusual characteristics (e.g., dents, bumper stickers), number of persons, etc.
- Suspect information: race, gender, age, height, weight, hair color, hair length and style, eye color, facial hair, clothing type and color, other characteristics (e.g., tattoos, missing teeth, scars, glasses), etc.

## **Emergencies. Call 911**

Emergencies include crimes that are in progress or about to happen, and ones that have resulted in serious personal injury, property damage, or property loss. They also include situations in which the suspect may still be at the scene and various kinds of suspicious activities. By calling **911** you will be linked to the appropriate police as well as fire fighting, medical, and ambulance services. You don't need money to call **911** from a pay phone.

When reporting an emergency be prepared to give an accurate description of what your emergency is and your location, especially if you are calling from a mobile cellular phone. The dispatcher has no way of knowing where you are if you are using a cellular phone unless you have a E911-ready phone that provides location information based on a Global Positioning System (GPS). (People with cell phones need to check with their vendor to determine if their phones are E911 ready. All new phones have a GPS capability but must be activated to work in that capacity.) Otherwise the dispatcher can determine the street address and apartment or condo unit only if you are calling from a fixed/wire line phone. If you are calling from a gated community or a controlled-access building, be sure to give the dispatcher the gate or door access code. Answer the dispatcher's questions about the emergency and don't hang up until you are told. With the address, if the line is disconnected or the caller cannot speak, an officer will still be dispatched. The following are considered emergencies for reporting purposes.

Persons doing the following:

- Sketching, taking notes, drawing maps or diagrams, photographing, videotaping, or otherwise monitoring facilities not normally associated with tourist activity or other places that may be targets for terrorist attacks, e.g., key government facilities, airports, bridges, chemical plants, power plants, schools, religious institutions, shopping centers, etc.
- Collecting detailed information on facility entrances, exits, driveways, parking spaces, etc.
- Using binoculars, high-magnification lenses, or night-vision or thermal-imaging devices in observing a facility or activity that may be a target
- Attempting to obtain information about a person, place, operation, or event that may be a target
- Attempting to improperly acquire explosives, detonators, timers, weapons, ammunition, etc.
- Attempting to buy large amounts of high-nitrate fertilizers
- Loading vehicles with weapons or explosives
- Attempting to improperly acquire official uniforms, passes, badges, etc.
- Seeking treatment for chemical burns or missing hands/fingers
- Having untreated chemical burns or missing hands/fingers

Objects in the open, or in vehicles or buildings having the following characteristics may be bombs:

- Unattended bags, backpacks, boxes, etc. near places that may be targets
- Having antennas, batteries, timers, capped pipes, etc.
- Emitting a strong chemical odor

Persons with several of the following characteristics may be suicide bombers carrying bombs.

- Are nervous, sweating, or mumbling
- Are wearing loose or bulky clothing that is inappropriate for the current weather conditions
- Are wearing an inordinate amount of perfume, cologne, or other scents that may be used to mask chemical odors
- Do not look like they belong in the uniform or dress they are wearing, which may be a disguise to elude detection
- Are carrying or wearing heavy objects
- Holding a bag or package close to his or her body

- Are repeatedly patting upper body or adjusting clothing
- Keeping one or both hands in pockets or close to his or her body, possible holding a detonator switch
- Having visible wires or an explosive belt protruding from under his or her clothing
- Having bulges or padding around the midsection
- Appearing well-groomed but wear sloppy clothing
- Having a pale face from recently shaving a beard
- Not responding to direct salutations or authoritative commands
- Walking in a deliberate, stiff, or awkward manner
- Acting in an unusually vigilant manner
- Having a blank facial expression, or appearing extremely focused or in a trance
- Exhibiting unusually calm and detached behavior

Letters or packages that contain a bomb or a chemical, biological, or radiological (CBR) threat may have one or more of the following characteristics. Handle them with great care. Don't shake, bump, smell, or open them. Isolate them and wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water.

- Are unexpected or from someone you don't know
- Are addressed to someone now longer at your address
- Have no return address or one that does not appear legitimate
- Are bulky, lumpy, or lopsided in appearance
- Have wires or other unusual contents that are protruding or can be felt through the envelope or wrapping
- Are sealed with excessive amounts of tape or string
- Have restrictive markings such as "Personal" or "Confidential"
- Have excessive postage
- Emit a strange odor
- Are mailed from a foreign country
- Do not have a named addressee, e.g., are addressed to a title only
- Have incorrect title or misspelled words in the address
- Have oily stains, discolorations, or crystallization on the wrapper

**Non-emergencies. Call SDPD at (619) 531-2000**

Non-emergencies are crimes and suspicious activities are ones in which: (a) there is no serious personal injury, property damage, or property loss; (b) the suspect has left the scene or is not likely to return; and (c) an immediate response is not needed. The following are considered non-emergencies for reporting purposes.

- Persons or activities that do not appear to belong in the workplace, neighborhood, business establishment, or near a key facility or event because of their demeanor, behavior, language, dress, activity, etc.
- Multiple sighting of the same suspicious persons, vehicles, or activities at the same location
- Deliveries of chemicals directly to self-storage facilities
- Unusual deliveries of chemicals to residences or rural addresses
- Street people not previously seen in the area, i.e., panhandlers, shoe shiners, food or flower vendors, newsagents, street sweepers, etc.

Persons doing the following:

- Sitting in a parked vehicle for an extended period of time
- Loitering in public places, e.g., bus stops and train stations
- Loitering near or wandering around a possible target
- Carrying on long conversations on pay or cellular phones near a possible target
- Wearing military or other uniforms that don't appear to belong in them
- Observing security measures or personnel, entry points, access controls, and perimeter barriers such as fences or walls, at a possible target
- Testing or probing security measures, e.g., by driving by a sensitive area, attempting to enter a sensitive area, inquiring about security measures, attempting to smuggle contraband through check points, asking for directions, claiming to be lost, etc.
- Attempting to enter a key facility without proper ID, prior notification and approval, etc.
- Being in a key facility without required visible ID
- Staring or quickly looking away from personnel or vehicles entering or leaving a key facility or parking area
- Carrying heavy bags or backpacks near a possible target
- Setting down bags or backpacks near a possible target and then walking away
- Behaving as if they may be planning a terrorist act, e.g., by mapping routes, timing traffic lights or traffic flow, playing out scenarios, monitoring key facilities or events, etc.

Vehicles that:

- Are parked near a key facility for an unusual period of time
- Are commonly used for deliveries, e.g., trucks, vans, or U-Hauls, that are parked in locations not usually used for deliveries without prior authorization
- Are out of place in the environment, e.g., a tractor-trailer parked in a residential neighborhood, and may have out-of-state or temporary plates
- Are abandoned
- Are overloaded
- Are leaking a fluid
- Have been modified to handle heavier than normal loads, additional storage space, or increased fuel capacity
- Have excessively darkened or tinted windows, or temporary window coverings to prevent viewing of the vehicle's interior
- Show signs of theft, e.g., damaged locks, missing windows, etc.
- Bear a temporary commercial placard affixed with tape or magnets, or a permanent placard that is unusual, unrecognizable, or has misspelled words
- Contain batteries, wiring, timers, other power supply or switching components, unmarked packages or unusual items such as PVC pipe, magnets, compressed gas cylinders, fire extinguishers, etc. in the passenger compartment
- Contain blueprints, maps, sketching materials, or surveillance equipment, e.g., binoculars, video cameras, high-magnification lenses, etc. in the passenger compartment